

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended) A separator plate for the production of printed circuit board components by pressing individual layers, which separator plate comprises includes a metallic core layer and a metal layer coating on at least one side of the core layer, wherein the core layer comprises a comparatively high well heat-conductive metal, and the core layer having comprises an outer surface on which said metal layer is applied to the core layer by cold plating, said metal layer being and made of a metal having a comparatively high surface hardness compared to the core layer and a lower heat conductivity than said core layer, said separator plate being interposed between stacks of printed circuit board layers which are subjected to compression under heat, said separator plate being a composite of said core layer and said outer metal layer to provide reduced heat expansion of the core layer during pressing of the individual layers of the circuit board components while preventing image tranfer to the separator plate.

Claim 2 (currently amended) A separator plate according to claim 1, wherein the core layer comprises on either side a said an outer metal layer applied by cold-plating and having the a comparatively high surface hardness.

Claim 3 (previously presented) A separator plate according to claim 1, wherein the outer metal layer is applied to the core layer by roll-bonding.

Claim 4 (currently amended) A separator plate according to claim 1, wherein the outer metal layer is made of steel such as, e.g., fine steel or carbon steel.

Claim 5 (original) A separator plate according to claim 1, wherein the outer metal layer is made of nickel.

Claim 6 (original) A separator plate according to claim 1, wherein the core layer is made of aluminum.

Claim 7 (original) A separator plate according to claim 1, wherein the core layer is

made of copper.

Claim 8 (original) A separator plate according to claim 1, wherein the core layer has a thickness of about 0.35 mm.

Claim 9 (original) A separator plate according to claim 1, wherein the outer metal layer has a thickness of about 0.075 mm.

Claim 10 (original) A separator plate according to claim 1, wherein a lubricant is applied to the outer metal layer.

Claim 11 (currently amended) A separator plate according to claim 10, wherein the lubricant ~~lubri-cant~~ is based on an olefin.

Claim 12 (previously presented) A separator plate according to claim 2, wherein the outer metal layer is applied to the core layer by roll-bonding.

Claim 13 (New) Apparatus for the production of printed circuit board components comprising means for pressing individual layers together at high pressure and temperature and between which individual layers separator plates are placed, each separator plate comprising a metallic core layer and a metal layer on opposite sides of the core layer, wherein the core layer comprises a comparatively high heat-conductivity metal, and said outer metal layer is applied to both sides of the core layer by cold-plating and is made of a metal having a comparatively high surface hardness said separator plate being in the form of a flat sheet to enable its placement between adjacent individual layers, said outer metal layers being smooth for intimate contact with the adjacent individual layers, said outer metal layer having a high surface hardness to resist pressure of pressing the individual layers together and prevent disruption of the individual layers while said core layer of high heat conductivity provides uniform heat distribution to the adjacent individual layers.

Claim 14 (New) The apparatus according to claim 13 comprising release layers placed on

both sides of the separator plate and extending beyond the separator plate, said release layers being joined together where they extend beyond the separator plate during said pressing to form a bag in which the separator plate is contained thereby enabling the removal of the separator plate from the bag and re-use in another pressing operation.

Claim 15 (New) A separator plate for the production of printed circuit board components by pressing individual layers, which separator plate comprises a metallic core layer and a metal layer on at least one side of the core layer, wherein the core layer comprises a comparatively high heat-conductive metal, the core layer having an outer surface on which said metal layer is applied by cold plating, said metal layer being made of a metal having a comparatively high surface hardness compared to the core layer and a lower heat conductivity than said core layer, said separator plate being interposed between stacks of printed circuit board layers which are subjected to compression under heat, said separator plate being a composite of said core layer and said outer metal layer to provide reduced heat expansion of the core layer during pressing of the individual layers of the circuit board components while preventing image transfer to the separator plate, said core layer having a thickness of about 0.35 mm, said outer metal layer having a thickness of about 0.075 mm, said outer metal layer having a smooth outer surface for intimate contact with the adjacent individual layers, said high surface hardness of the outer metal layer serving as a means for resisting pressure in the press and preventing disruption of the individual layers and image transfer to the separator plate, said core layer of high heat conductivity then serving as a means for providing uniform heat distribution to the adjacent individual layers.